



Minnesota Guide for Field/Area Office Civil Rights Compliance Reviews



OFFICE LOCATION:

REVIEW DATE (S):

Civil Rights Compliance Review

Reviewed By: _____

Review Date (s): _____

- Purpose:** The purpose of Civil Rights Compliance Review is to:
- Measure the effectiveness of NRCS Equal Employment Opportunity (Title VII) and Compliance in Program Delivery (Title VI) in the field office
 - Determine the extent that the field office employees understand the CR programs and their responsibilities
 - Identify CR deficiencies, and
 - Provide assistance and guidance for fulfilling NRCS CR goals and objectives
 - Recognize commitment, leadership, creative and innovative management of the Civil Rights program.
 - **The information in red may not pertain to all office's that are reviewed**

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1. Civil Rights Responsibilities

Requirements: 7 CFR-Part 15, USDA, N+J23 Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted and Conducted Programs, requires Agencies to develop plans, procedures, and directives necessary to manage its program objectives. Regional and state conservationists are required to manage their CR activities through:

- ◆ positive directives and notices
- ◆ staff training
- ◆ onsite compliance reviews
- ◆ the Agency Civil Rights Implementation Plan.
- ◆ Examples

[\(Review position descriptions and performance plans of all supervisors and managers to determine appropriate assigned responsibilities. Review position descriptions and performance plans of all other NRCS employees to determine appropriate civil rights responsibilities.\)](#)

Civil Rights Compliance Requirements Questions	Accomplished	
	Yes Notes	No Notes
Are CR responsibilities included in all employee job descriptions (attach applicable pages)?		
Are CR responsibilities included in all employee performance plans (attach applicable pages)?		
Does business plan include measurable civil rights objectives, goals and action items (attach applicable pages)?		
Are employee's complying with the USDA policy of not assisting and/or attending meetings of organizations or groups that exclude minorities, women, and persons with disabilities from membership/or participation? Example: country clubs, lodges, etc.		
FINDINGS:		
RECOMMENDATIONS:		
CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TAKEN ON SITE:		

2. Information from last 2 Civil Rights reviews-

Requirements: Every office should have a civil rights review at least once every 3-5 years. The last two civil rights reviews shall be filed in the six part folder. This information shall be made available to all authorized personnel in NRCS, USDA and DOJ upon request. Upon completion of each review, a copy of the review shall be sent to the State Conservationist.

Dates of last two civil rights reviews- _____

(List significant findings or Agreed-to-items ([Recommendations](#)) from [the last two appraisals](#), and show disposition of each of these items.
Attach a copy of agreed to items or type key items here:)

Civil Rights Compliance Requirements Questions	Accomplished	
	Yes Notes	No Notes
Has a civil rights review been conducted in the last 3-5 years in this office?		
Were the last two reviews properly filed in the six-part folder?		
Were all items needing action properly addressed?		
FINDINGS:		
RECOMMENDATIONS:		
CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TAKEN ON SITE:		

3. Program Evaluation and Data Collection

Requirements: The Department of Justice Regulations 28 CFR parts 42.405-6 and 42.407 and Department of Agriculture Regulation 7 CFR part 15.5, require the monitoring and evaluation of programs to assure that they are administered in a non discriminatory manner as well as the collection and evaluation of racial, ethnic, and sex data of present and potential beneficiaries.

(Review and examine the data on minority, non-minority, and female operating units. List data source and the year. Should have updated the list sometime in the last two years. Review PRMS parity reports, should maintain for 3 years if available. The PRMS parity reports calculate the % of persons identified through ag census data have received NRCS assistance/service. This service % is then compared with the service % of white male Non-Hispanics. Any service within 10% has parity.)

Civil Rights Compliance Requirements Questions	Accomplished	
	Yes Notes	No Notes
Have you established the number of potential/eligible program beneficiaries in the county (provide attachments)?		
Is data maintained by race and sex?		
Does the data reflect that minorities and women are participating in programs in a proportionate manner?		

Has the field office retained program data by RSNO for 3 years after the end of the program year?		
If any disparities have been found, what actions has the field office taken to correct them?		
FINDINGS:		
RECOMMENDATIONS:		
CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TAKEN ON SITE:		

4. Equal Employment Opportunity and Civil Rights Training

Requirements: DR 4330-1 provide direction on basic responsibilities for providing training on carrying out the laws and regulations as they relate to CR.

(Training could include training put on by USDA, NHQ, state staff or area staff, or held during field office staff meetings. Indicate names, dates, and location of training. This training will be documented in the civil rights 6-part folder.)

Civil Rights Compliance Requirements Questions	Accomplished	
	Yes Notes	No Notes
Is civil rights training documented in the civil rights folder?		
<p>Have all employees hired within 6 months received training on:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Simple Justice – (video)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Special Emphasis Programs – (self study guide)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Preventing Sexual Harassment – (self study guide)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> How to file a USDA Program Discrimination Complaint – (review of on-line procedures)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> How to file an EEO complaint- (review of on-line procedures)</p>		

<p>Have all employees received training within the last 3 years on:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Civil Rights Compliance in Program Delivery?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Equal Employment Opportunity?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The Prevention of Sexual Harassment?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Civil Rights and EEO Complaints?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Special Emphasis/Disability Employment Programs?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is training made available to SWCD and RC&D council employees and/or boards if requested and available?</p>		
FINDINGS:		
RECOMMENDATIONS:		
CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TAKEN ON SITE:		

5. Public Notification

Requirements: The Department of Justice Regulation 28 CFR part 42.405, Departmental Regulations 4300-3, require a positive and continuing notification of equal opportunity policy to the public about NRCS programs and activities through:

- ◆ publications
- ◆ news releases
- ◆ posters
- ◆ personal contact
- ◆ grassroots organizations
- ◆ meetings, and
- ◆ newsletter, and
- ◆ mass media, etc.

(Review and report on the status of newspaper articles and/or news releases prepared by NRCS staff regarding the inclusion of the nondiscrimination statement. This statement should be included in the body of the news releases announcing new programs or changes in programs.

What outreach efforts were made to reach female, minority or persons with disabilities?

Any publication or information sheet displayed or distributed by NRCS must have the nondiscrimination statement.

Indicate the location of all required posters. These posters must be displayed in the NRCS office space or shared USDA space and located so that clients may readily see them when they enter the office.)

<u>Civil Rights Compliance Requirements</u> Questions	<u>Accomplished</u>	
	Yes Notes	No Notes
Is there a mailing list used by the office to inform potential beneficiaries of NRCS programs and/or activities that is coded by RSNOD that is updated within the past two years (attach sample pages)?		
Has NRCS program information been disseminated to actual and potential program beneficiaries, particularly to minorities, females, and persons with disabilities through: <input type="checkbox"/> News articles? <input type="checkbox"/> District/NRCS Newsletters? <input type="checkbox"/> Community meetings to explain new program changes to potential customers? <input type="checkbox"/> Working with grassroots organizations? <input type="checkbox"/> Use of minority, female, or disability group news media or outlets?		
Is the nondiscrimination statement included in: <input type="checkbox"/> News articles that announce new programs, program changes, or program information? <input type="checkbox"/> District NRCS newsletters? <input type="checkbox"/> Program fact sheets? <input type="checkbox"/> Fact sheets or publications displayed for public information, etc.?		
Does the nondiscrimination statement include all non-discrimination bases required by statutes?		
Are NRCS civil rights success stories submitted to news outlets?		

Does the office include participants of different RSNOD in its photographs and other graphics used to provide program related information to convey the message of equal opportunity and access?		
<p>Are the following posters displayed in a prominent location in the NRCS Office so that they are readily visible to customers when entering the office?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> And Justice for All?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> USDA Civil Rights Policy Statement?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> EEO Equal Employment Opportunity Counseling Program?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Civil Rights/Equal Opportunity (EEO) Counseling and Mediation?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Harassment..it could cost you your job...and a whole lot more?</p>		
Have grassroots organizations been identified?		
Does documentation at field office reflect outreach efforts to groups representing minorities, women, and persons with disabilities?		
Has the NRCS State Office developed informational materials to meet the needs of bilingual and disabled producers when required?		
FINDINGS:		
RECOMMENDATIONS:		
CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TAKEN ON SITE:		

6. Records

Requirements: DR. 4330-1 requires that CR files be maintained.

(Check to see if the office is maintaining a separate civil rights file and does it contain current material. Recommend using the 6-part folder if not already do-

ing so. Look for how the office has filed the [GM supplement 230-EOP, Issue 13, Part 405 \(subparts A, B and C\) \(dated 11/8/99\)](#); [USDA Civil Rights at the United States Department of Agriculture, A report by the Civil Rights Action Team \(dated 2/97\)](#); and [USDA Unlocking Barriers, Keys to Communicating with Under-Served Customers](#).

<u>Civil Rights Compliance Requirements</u> Questions	<u>Accomplished</u>	
	Yes Notes	No Notes
Examine the status whether the Civil Rights Files have been established and updated to include NRCS Civil Rights Management directives, policies, bulletins, memos, complaints, and is filed appropriately under one of the 6 covers of the 6-part folder .		
FINDINGS:		
RECOMMENDATIONS:		
CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TAKEN ON SITE:		

7. Civil Rights Discrimination Complaints

Requirements: The Department of Justice Regulations 28 CFR part 42.408, Department of Agriculture Regulations 7 CFR part 15.6, and the "And Justice for All" posters provide the instructions for filing a complaint of discrimination in program and or service delivery when a customer feels that he/she has been denied program benefits or services on any one of the prohibited factors.

<u>Civil Rights Compliance Requirements</u> Questions	<u>Accomplished</u>	
	Yes Notes	No Notes
Do all employees know the basis for which a civil rights discrimination complaint can be filed?		
Do all employees know how to accept and process a civil rights discrimination complaint?		
Is there is copy of instructions on file?		
Are all employees aware of the procedures in the instructions?		

Have you received any complaints of discrimination in the last two years?		
If yes to 7e, what was the nature of the complaint?		
How was it received?		
FINDINGS:		
RECOMMENDATIONS:		
CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TAKEN ON SITE:		

8. NRCS Partnerships Responsibility

Requirements: USDA 7 CFR-15 section set forth the Recipients' responsibilities in program delivery.

(Review if office is maintaining a current listing of potential female and/or minority candidates to review with SWCD boards and RC&D Councils as appropriate)

<u>Civil Rights Compliance Requirements</u> Questions	<u>Accomplished</u>	
	Yes Notes	No Notes
Has the DC annually reviewed with the SWCD board the Mutual Agreement including: Civil Rights, EEO, Drug-Free Workplace and Non-Discrimination Provisions?		
What is the current makeup of the SWCD board and RC&D Council(s)?		
Does the Board/Council(s) have an outreach program to encourage eligible females/minorities to seek an elected/ appointed office as a board member? <input type="checkbox"/> Outline the outreach effort. <input type="checkbox"/> The qualifications required to seek the elected office.		
Methods used by the Board/Council(s) to disseminate election information to all eligible voters.		

If 5% or more of the eligible voters in a community are minority/group members, was there a minority on the District Board/Council(s) list of nominees?		
If minority eligible voters for the County is more than 5%, does the Board/ Council(s) have an appointed Minority member?		
Identify documented actions taken by NRCS employee(s) to appoint minority members.		
If 50% or more of the eligible voters in a community are females, was there a female on the District Board list of nominees?		
Describe actions you have taken to encourage participation of minorities and females in the electoral process.		
Describe actions you have taken to encourage the appointment of disabled and/or females as a District Board member.		
Can you offer any ideas how to get minorities and females more involved in the election process.		
FINDINGS:		
RECOMMENDATIONS:		
CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TAKEN ON SITE:		

9. Access To NRCS Facilities By the Disabled

Requirements: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 7 CFR part 15b.4, require that all offices be accessible to disabled persons.

[\(Review and document any special efforts made to assist any persons with disabilities\)](#)

<u>Civil Rights Compliance Requirements</u> Questions	<u>Accomplished</u>	
	Yes Notes	No Notes

<p>Is the office making any special accommodations to assist clients with disabilities?</p>		
<p>a. Entrances (Check Status):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are ramps or lowered curbs provided from the street, sidewalk, or parking?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are wheelchair entrances provided from the street, sidewalk, or parking to every reasonable subdivision of space where a physically disabled person may visit or work?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is at least one main entrance accessible?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are door handles operated by a single effort? I.e. lever-operated or push-type mechanisms.</p>		
<p>b. Parking (Check status):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are accessible spaces provided in parking areas closest to the building for use by the physically disabled?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are the spaces at least 8-feet wide with a 5-foot wide access aisle to sidewalks and ramps? Two spaces may share a common aisle.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are spaces designed to ensure that disabled persons are not compelled to wheel or walk behind cars?</p>		
<p>c. Curb Ramps (Check status):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are curb ramps provided wherever an accessible route crosses a curb?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is the minimum width of a curb ramp 36 inches, exclusive of flared sides.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are built up curb ramps located so that they do not project into vehicle traffic lanes?</p>		

<p>d. Water Fountains (Check status):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are fountains accessible to and usable by the physically disabled?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do they have an up front spout and control which is located no higher than 36 inches above the floor?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does the spout provide a flow of water at least 4 inches high to allow for the insertion of a cup or glass under the flow of water?</p>		
<p>e. Rest Rooms (Check status):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do public toilet rooms have accessible fixtures, accessories, doors, and adequate maneuvering clearance?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do the doors swing away from the floor space required by any fixture?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are sinks mounted with the counter or rim no higher than 34 inches above the floor?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is knee clearance at least 27 inches high, 30 inches wide, and 19 inches deep provided underneath sinks?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is faucet mechanism a lever-operated push-type or electronically controlled?</p>		
<p>f. Switches (Check status):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are switches and controls for lights, heat, fire alarms, and similar controls of frequent or essential use placed no higher than 54 inches above the floor?</p>		

<p>g. Interior Doors and Office (Check status):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are doors at least 36 inches with a minimum opening of 32 inches and of sturdy construction?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are they operable by a single effort?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do handles, pulls, latches, locks, and other operating devices on accessible doors have a shape that is easy to grasp with one hand and does not require light grasping, tight pinching, or wrist twisting to operate?</p>		
<p>h. Is elevator operation automatic and each car equipped with a self-leveling feature that will automatically bring the car to floor landings within a tolerance of 1/2 inch under rated loading to zero loading conditions?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are call buttons centered at 42 inches above the floor and have visual signals to indicate when each call is answered?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is the button designating the up direction on top and raised or flush?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Once inside the office, can a person in a wheelchair move about the office freely?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Has the DC or responsible person assessed accessibility requirements and deficiencies?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> After assessing accessibility requirements and deficiencies?</p>		
FINDINGS:		
RECOMMENDATIONS:		
CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TAKEN ON SITE:		

10. Field Office Employment

Requirements: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Regulations 29 CFR, Part 1614.101, require the head of each Agency to exercise personal leadership in establishing, maintaining, and carrying out a continuing Affirmative Employment Program designed to promote equal opportunity in every aspect of Agency personnel policy and practice in the employment, development, advancement, and treatment of employees.

<u>Civil Rights Compliance Requirements</u> Questions	<u>Accomplished</u>	
	Yes Notes	No Notes
Have you discussed EEO with the field office staff?		
Are employees informed of vacancies?		
Are vacancy announcement received in a timely fashion?		
Are vacancy announcements posted on the bulletin boards?		
Do you maintain employment application in an active file for at least a year?		
Have you hired any employees?		
How did employees you have hired learn of this vacancy?		
FINDINGS:		
RECOMMENDATIONS:		
CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TAKEN ON SITE:		

11. Recruitment

Requirements: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Regulations, 29 CFR, Part 1614.102 (a) (4), require the Agency to communicate its Equal Employment Opportunity policies, program, and employment needs to all sources of job candidates without regard to age, color, disability, marital status, national origin, race, religion, [political beliefs](#), [sexual orientation](#), [familial status](#) or sex. These regulations also require the Agency to solicit assistance in the recruitment of minorities, females, and persons with disabilities.

<u>Civil Rights Compliance Requirements</u> Questions	<u>Accomplished</u>	
	Yes Notes	No Notes

Is the "Equal Employment Opportunity" nondiscrimination statement included in all vacancy announcements?		
Are vacancy announcements advertised in the local newspaper?		
What other methods are used to publicize vacancies?		
Are minority news media used, if available?		
Have your organizations for minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities been contacted?		
Do you recruit at: <input type="checkbox"/> 1862 Schools (Land Grant Colleges and Universities)? <input type="checkbox"/> 1890 Schools (Land Grant Colleges and Universities)? <input type="checkbox"/> 1994 Schools (Land Grant Colleges and Universities)? <input type="checkbox"/> HACU Schools? <input type="checkbox"/> Asian American/Pacific Islander Schools? <input type="checkbox"/> Native American/Alaskan Native Schools?		
Work Force Profile Number of FT/PT and Intermittent Staff in office by race and sex.		

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position Title</u>	<u>Grade & Step</u>	<u>Race</u>	<u>Sex</u>
FINDINGS:				
RECOMMENDATIONS:				
CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TAKEN ON SITE:				

12. Counseling, Mediation, and Complaints

Requirements: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Regulations, 29 CFR, Part 1614.105 (a) and 1614 (a) (2), require Agencies to provide assistance for:

- ◆ persons who believe they have been discriminated against on basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap, **political beliefs, sexual orientation, familial** or marital status must consult a counselor prior to filing a complaint in order to informally resolve the matter, and
- ◆ prompt, fair, and impartial consideration and disposition of complaints.

<u>Civil Rights Compliance Requirements</u> Questions	<u>Accomplished</u>	
	Yes Notes	No Notes
Do employees understand the EEO counseling and complaint process?		
Do employees know how to contact an EEO Counselor?		
Is the EEO Poster displayed in the office so that employees will know who to contact or who EEO counselors are?		
FINDINGS:		
RECOMMENDATIONS:		
CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TAKEN ON SITE:		

13. Awards

Requirements: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Regulations, 29 CFR, Part 1614.102 (a) (5) (10) (13), require Agencies to:

- ◆ review, evaluate, and control managerial and supervisory performance in such a manner as to ensure a continuing affirmative application and vigorous enforcement of the policy of equal opportunity.
- ◆ provide orientation, training, and advice to managers and supervisors to assure their understanding and implementation of the Equal Employment Opportunity policy and program.
- ◆ provide recognition to employees, supervisors, managers, and units demonstrating superior accomplishment in Equal Employment Opportunity, and

- ◆ inform its employees and recognized employee organizations of the affirmative Equal Employment Opportunity policy and program and enlist their cooperation.

<u>Civil Rights Compliance Requirements</u> Questions	<u>Accomplished</u>	
	Yes Notes	No Notes
Has the responsible person received award or recognition for outstanding achievements in equal employment opportunity or civil rights activities?		
Has the supervisor recognized an employee for outstanding efforts in equal employment opportunity or civil rights work?		
Provide the racial and ethnic breakdown of the outstanding recipients of EEO and CR awards.		
FINDINGS:		
RECOMMENDATIONS:		
CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TAKEN ON SITE:		

14. Special Emphasis Program

Requirement: Special Emphasis Program's (SEP), are established to enhance opportunity of designated CR groups for:

- ◆ recruitment,
- ◆ employment,
- ◆ development, and
- ◆ advancement

<u>Civil Rights Compliance Requirements</u> Questions	<u>Accomplished</u>	
	Yes Notes	No Notes
Do you see information from SEP Manager (Administrative Officer) on the Special Emphasis Programs? (I.e. Women's History Month, Black History Month, etc.)		
Are there awareness activities and/or discussions held in this office? Are all employees aware of the months of special emphasis?		

Are you aware of SEP activities and initiatives by State Office?		
FINDINGS:		
RECOMMENDATIONS:		
CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TAKEN ON SITE:		

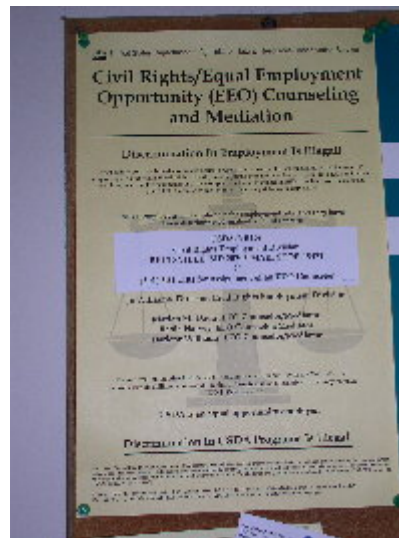
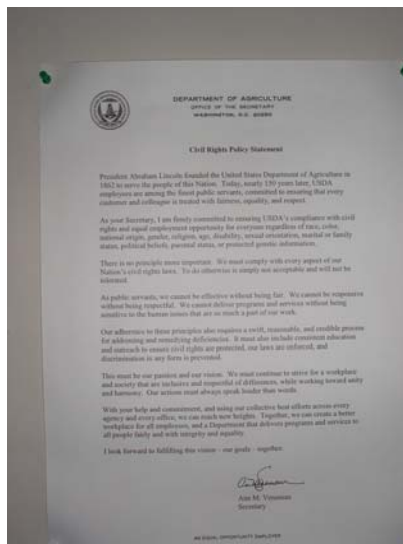
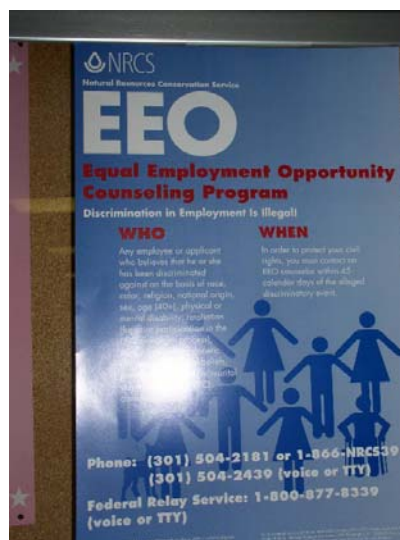
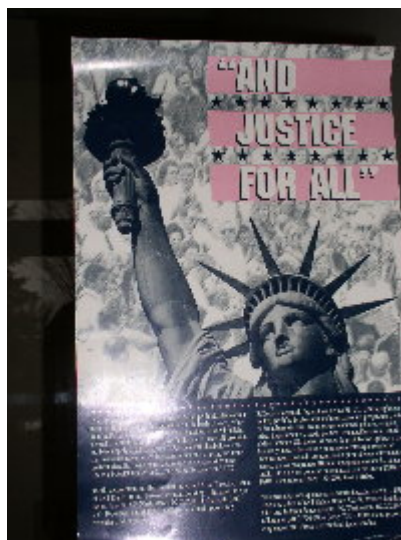
15. Employee Awareness

Requirement: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Regulations, 29 CFR, Part 2624.102 (a) (13) and (b) (3), hold Agencies responsible for communicating Equal Employment Opportunity policies, programs, and employment needs to all employees.

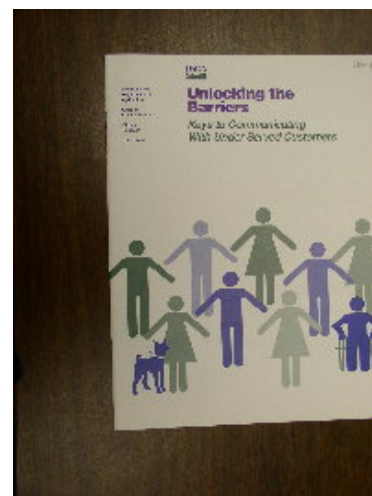
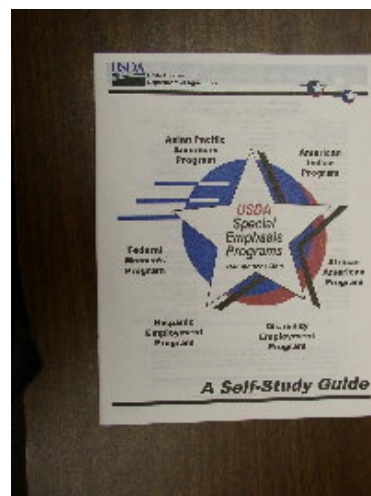
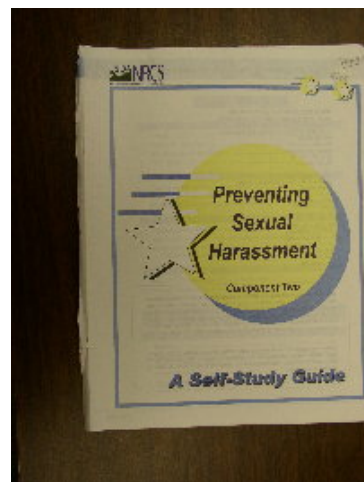
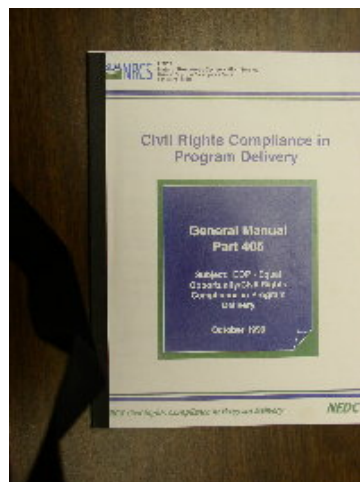
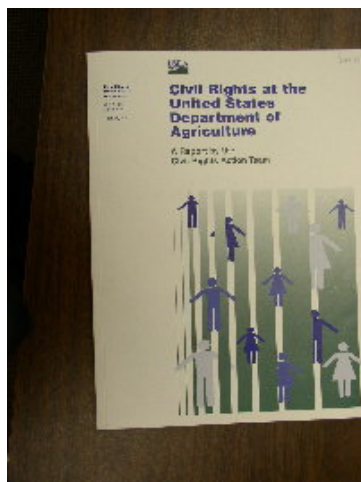
<u>Civil Rights Compliance Requirements</u> Questions	<u>Accomplished</u>	
	Yes Notes	No Notes
Is the sexual harassment poster ‘ Sexual Harassment...it could cost you your job...and a whole lot more ’ posted where visible to all employees?		
Is the EEO Counselor information posted in the office where it can easily be seen by applicants and employees?		
Are the following NRCS policy statements displayed in the office where they can easily be seen by applicants, employees, and producers: <input type="checkbox"/> EEO <input type="checkbox"/> Prevention of Sexual Harassment		
Has the supervisor discussed the equal employment opportunity policy and program with employees?		
Has the supervisor discussed prevention of sexual harassment with employees?		
Has the supervisor discussed workforce diversity with employees?		

Do all employees know the difference between Equal Employment Opportunity and Civil Rights complaints?		
Have you discussed the complaint procedures with field office staff?		
Are civil rights requirements relative to program delivery discussed in staff meetings?		
Is EEO discussed at staff meetings?		
Have you discussed EEO & CR policies with the Conservation District Board/ RC&D Council ?		
FINDINGS:		
RECOMMENDATIONS:		
CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TAKEN ON SITE:		
NOTEWORTHY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:		

Appendix A. Display of Required Posters



Appendix B. Required Training and CR Information



SUBJECT: EEO - NRCS Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy

APR 15 2003

TO: All NRCS Employees

File Code: 230

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is committed to ensuring a work environment that is free of sexual harassment. It is the policy of NRCS to enforce a "zero tolerance" policy for sexual harassment.

As Chief, I am committed to ensuring that NRCS employees and customers, male and female, are permitted to work in an environment that is free from sexual harassment and from retaliation for reporting such harassment. Sexual harassment is illegal, and is a form of sex discrimination that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

For the purpose of this policy statement, sexual harassment is defined as:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to or rejection of such conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that the work environment is free from discrimination. To do otherwise is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. These officials must take prompt and appropriate action when sexual harassment is alleged. It is also important to safeguard and be sensitive to every employee's right to work in an environment that is free of offensive misconduct. Reports of violations must be examined immediately, and resolved swiftly, consistently, and fairly. Reprisal against any person alleging sexual harassment should be taken seriously. Any NRCS employee who is found to have engaged in sexual harassment is subject to immediate disciplinary action up to and including removal.